AMERICAN PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR

AND

Literary Gazette.

ISSUED WEEKLY BY THE BOOK PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION.

Temporary Committee, WILLIAM H. APPLETON, GEORGE P. PUTNAM.

Communications should be addressed to C. B. NORTON, *Assistant Secretary and Librarian, No. 3 Appletons' Building, Broadway.*

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CHEAP BOOK CLUBS.

One of the first attempts, and it was a successful one, to establish a cheap Book-Club was made by Robert Burns. He had founded a Society at Tarbolton, called the Bachelor's Club, which met monthly for the purposes of discussion and conversation. But this was a club without books; for the fines levied upon the members were spent in conviviality. Having changed his residence to Mauchline, a similar club was established there, but with one important alteration:—the fines were set apart for the purchase of books, and the first work bought was 'The Mirror,' by Henry Mackenzie. Dr. Currie, the biographer of Burns, in recording this fact, says: "With deference to the Conversation Society of Mauchline, it may be doubted whether the books which they purchased were of a kind best adapted to promote the interest and happiness of persons in this situation of life." The objection of Dr. Currie was founded upon his belief that works which cultivated "delicacy of taste" were unfitted for those who pursued manual occupations. He qualifies his objection, however, by the remark, that "Every human being is a proper judge of his own happiness, and within the path of innocence ought to be permitted to pursue it. Since it is the taste of the Scottish peasantry to give a preference to works of taste and fancy, it may be presumed they find a superior gratification in the perusal of such works." This truth, timidly put by Dr. Currie, ought to be the foundation of every attempt to provide books for all readers. We are learning to correct the false opinions which, for a century or two, have been degrading the national character by lowering the general taste. Those who maintained that taste was the exclusive property of the rich and the luxurious, could not take away from the humble the beauty of the rose or the fragrance of the violet; they could not make the nightingale sing a vulgar note to "the swink'd hedger at his supper;" nor, speaking purely to a question of taste, did they venture to lower the noble translation of the Bible, which they put into the hands of the poor man, to something which, according to the insolent formula of those days, was "adapted to the meanest capacity." A great deal of this has passed away. It has been discovered that music is a fitting thing to be cultivated by the people; the doors of galleries are thrown open for the people to gaze upon Raffaelles and Correggios; even cottages are built so as to satisfy a feeling of proportion, and to make their inmates aspire to something like decoration. All this is progress in the right direction.

In the year 1825 Lord Brougham (then Mr. Brougham), in his 'Practical Observations upon the Education of the People,' explained a plan which has yet been only partially acted upon. "Book-Clubs or Reading Societies may be established by very small numbers of contributors, and require an inconsiderable fund. If the associates live near one another, arrangements may be easily made for circulating the books, so that they may be in use every moment that any one can spare from his work. Here too, the rich have an opportunity presented to them of promoting instruction without constant interference: the gift of a few books, as a beginning, will generally prove a sufficient encouragement to carry on the plan by weekly or monthly contributions: and, with the gift, a scheme may be communicated to assist the contributors in arranging the plan of their association." Simple in its working as such a plan would appear to be, the instances of these voluntary associations are really few. In Scotland, Lending Libraries and Itinerating Libraries have, in some districts, been established successfully; but in England, Lending Libraries are scarcely to be found, except in connection with schools, or under the immediate direction of the minister of a parish or of a dissenting congregation. In these cases, we fear, comes too frequently into action the desire, laudable no doubt, to promote "the interest and happiness of persons in this situation of life." They are not permitted to choose for themselves. The best books of amusement are kept out of their sight; and they contrive to get hold of the worst. The timidity which insists upon supplying these libraries with *pattern* books renders the libraries disagreeable, and therefore useless.

The Circulating Library—what a revolution was that in popular literature! How this new plant appeared above the earth, where it first budded, where it bore its early fruit—how it grew into a great tree, like that in the old title to Lilly's Grammar, where the apples of knowledge are being gathered by little climbing boys—would be difficult to trace and to record. There it was—this great economiser of individual outlay for books—in most market-towns at the beginning of the century. The universal adoption of the name is the best proof of the common recognition of the idea. It changed the habits of the old country booksellers. It found them other occupation than keeping a stall in the market-place, as did their worthy forefathers. They dealt no longer in tracts and single sermons. It sent the chap-books into the villages. It made the 'Seven Champions of Christendom' and 'The Wise Masters of Greece' vulgar. It created a new literature of fiction. It banished 'Robinson Crusoe' to the kitchen, and 'The Arabian Nights' to the nursery. It built up great printing-houses in Leadenhall-street; and held out high rewards for rapid composition, at the rate of five pounds per volume, to decayed governesses who had seen the world, and bank-clerks of an imaginative turn of mind. These could produce a wilderness of Italian bandits, with unlimited wealth and beauty, who had won the hearts of credulous countesses, and only surrendered to the hangman when whole armies came out to take them. These could unveil all the mysterious luxuries of great mansions in Grosvenor-square, or of sumptuous hotels in Bond-street.. There was ever and anon a "bright particular star" in the Milky Way of popular fiction. But the circulating library went on its own course, whether the empyrean of romance were dim or brilliant. "What have you got new?" was the universal question put to the guardian of the treasures of this recently-discovered world of letters. When the bower-maid of the luxurious fair one, who lolled upon the sofa through a long summer's day, as Gray did when he was deep in Crébillon, came to "change" the book, great sometimes was the perplexity. It was not a difficult task to "change," but the newness was puzzling. The lady and the neat-handed Phillis pursued their studies simultaneously. They did not like "letters." 'Sir Charles Grandison' was as old and as tiresome as 'Pamela.' 'Tom Jones,' and 'Peregrine Pickle;' they wondered why they were allowed to remain in the catalogue. They had read 'Cœlebs in search of a Wife'—the charming book—but they did not want it again. Perhaps, suggested the bookseller's apprentice, 'The Monk' might do once more. And so the circulating library went on, slow and struggling, till, about 1814, the unlucky desire for "something new" brought down to the little greasy collection, whose delusive numbers of volumes ranged from 1 to 3250, a new novel, with the somewhat unpromising title of 'Waverley, or 'tis Sixty Years since.' At first, the lady upon the sofa, and the counsellor of her studies, could not endure it, for it was full of horrid Scotch. It was often "at home," as the phrase went, for six months of its proba

tion; when, somehow, it was discovered that a new book of wonderful talent had come out of the North. Another and another came, and in a few years the old circulating library was ruined. The Burneys, and Edgeworths, and Radcliffes, and Godwins, and Holcrofts, who had mixed with much lower company upon the librarian's shelves, still held a place. But the Winters in London and Winters in Bath, the Midnight Bells, the Nuns, and the Watch Towers, retired from business. There was then a new epoch in the circulating-library life. The literature of travels and memoirs timidly claimed a place by the side of the fashionable novel, which asserted its dignity by raising its price to a guinea and a half. The old legitimate stupidity, which did very well before the trade was disturbed, would no longer "circulate." But the names of the producers of the higher fiction were not "Legion." "Something new" must still be had. To meet the market, every variety of west-end authorship was experimented upon. The number to be printed could be calculated with tolerable exactness, according to the reputation of the writer,—and this calculation regulated the payment of copyright, from fifty pounds, and five hundred printed, to the man without a name, up to fifteen hundred pounds, and an impression of three thousand, to "the glass of fashion." But in this department of the commerce of literature, as it will be in the end with every branch upon which the growth of popular intelligence is operating,—the rubbish is perishable, has perished; the good endureth.

The circulating library is now, in many instances, a real instrument of popular enlightenment. Yet in some of the smaller towns, and in watering-places where raffles have their charm, and a musical performance is patronised in the 'Fancy Repository,' by "audience fit though few," there the circulating library may be studied in its ancient brilliancy. There are still preserved, with a paper number on their brown leather backs, and a well-worn bill of terms of subscription on their sides, those volumes, now fading into oblivion, whence the writers of many a penny journal of fiction are drawing and will still draw their inspiration. Many of these relics of a past age will live over again in shilling volumes with new titles. The heroes and heroines will change their names; the furniture of the apartments in which they utter their vows of love will be modernized; every sentence which in the slightest degree approaches the vulgar will be softened down or obliterated. There is a great deal yet to be done in this way; and the metamorphosis will go on and prosper. In the mean while the circulating libraries, both in London and the provinces, are supporting a higher literature of fiction than those of the past generation; and they find also that there are other volumes almost as attractive as the last new novel. They are doing the same work as the book-clubs. Both these modes of co-operation have had the effect of making the demand for a book that is at once solid and attractive more certain than the old demand by individual purchasers. The certainty of the demand necessarily produces a gradual reduction of price. An average demand is created, resulting from an average of taste in those who belong to book-societies, and subscribe to circulating libraries. But these channels for the sale of new books are not materially influenced by lowness of price. Cheapness is greatly influential with the private purchaser; but very many are content with the reading of a new book, through the club or the library, who would never buy it for their own household. This first demand is one of the means by which good books may be cheapened for a subsequent large issue for the permanent home library. In "The Life of Lackington" there is the following passage:—"I have been informed that, when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed; and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted; as from these repositories many thousand families have been cheaply supplied with books, by which the taste of reading has become much more general, and thousands of books are purchased every year by such as have first borrowed them at those libraries, and after reading, approving of them, have become purchasers."—CHARLES KNIGHT.

Literary Intelligence.

AMERICAN.

"Doesticks" is now engaged in writing a burlesque of three thousand lines on Longfellow's "Hiawatha," for a New York publisher.

Geo. W. Foster, of Florence, Alabama, has endowed a professorship in the college of that place with $10,000. His endowment fills the mathematical chair, and is called the Foster Professorship.

Dr. Spaulding, the eminent Catholic divine, Bishop of Louisville, is delivering his course of lectures on "the elements and history of modern civilization," before the Catholic Institute of New Orleans.

Judge Story's law library is to be sold at auction, in Boston, next week.

FOREIGN.

JOHN BUNYAN.—Lord Campbell, the present distinguished Chief Justice of England, in remarking upon the *Pilgrim's Progress*, says: "Little do we know what is for our permanent good. Had Bunyan been discharged and allowed to enjoy his liberty, he, no doubt, would have returned to his trade, filling up his intervals of leisure with field preaching; his name would not have survived his own generation, and he would have done little for the religious improvement of mankind. The prison doors were shut upon him for twelve years. Being cut off from the external world, he communed with his own soul, and inspired by Him who touched Isaiah's lips with fire, he composed the noblest allegory, the merit of which was first discovered by the lowly, but which is now lauded by the refined critic, and which has done more to awaken piety, and to enforce the precepts of Christian morality, than all the sermons that have been published by all the prelates of the Anglican Church."

T. B. Macaulay has retired from Parliament. The Whigs intend to put forward Adam Black, the publisher, to represent Edinburgh in his stead.

The Asiatic Society at Paris has commenced the publication of a "Collection d'Auteurs Orientaux." Ibn Betuta's Travels, Masudi's 'History of the World,' and Ibn Hisham's 'Life of Mahomet,' are the first printed works in the series. Of Ibn Betuta's Travels two volumes have appeared already,—the third volume is to follow speedily; the first volume of Masudi's 'History' is almost in print. Ibn Betuta, it will be remembered, belongs to the most remarkable class of travellers in the Middle Ages. Born at Morocco, in 1302, he made, in 1325, his pilgrimage to Mecca, from which time he gave himself up to a wandering life, enchanted, as it were, by the sight of the devotional congress "of all nations" at the birthplace of the Prophet, and engulphed, by its means, into the vortex of the many-peopled East. He was in India and China, in Russia and Persia, nay, even in the interior of Africa, where he lived for several years at Timbuctoo. For some time he was First Judge at Delhi, and Ambassador of the Great Mogul in China. After having spent more than thirty years in various countries, he wrote down his experiences at Tangier, unfolding in his report a lively picture of the East, as it was at that time. These Travels are to fill, in the new Paris edition, five volumes. The Arabic original will be accompanied by a French translation by MM. Defremery and Sanguinetti.

The *Librairie Nouvelle* at Paris has purchased the right to print an edition of 10,000 copies of the works of the late Madame Émile de Girardin (Delphine Gay), in eight volumes, at the price of 1 franc each. The first volume, containing the tales, 'Le Lorgnon,' 'La Canne de M. de Balzac,' and 'Il ne faut pas jouer avec la Douleur,' has just been published. The next volume, containing 'Les Contes d'une Vieille Fille a ses Neveux,' is to follow immediately. These tales of an old maid, it is well known, are held in high esteem in France, and considered to be quite little master-pieces in their *genre*.

Herr Friedrich Bodenstedt, we read in the German papers, has written a tragedy, 'Demetrius,' which is to be represented, for the first time, at Vienna.

Victor Hugo is about to publish his "*Contemplations*," a poem of some twelve thousand lines. It is said that there are no references to contemporary history, so that it will probably be tolerated in France.

It is said that the poet Rogers has left five volumes of Memoirs, ready for the press, in the hands of his executor and publisher, Mr. Moxon, of London. A volume of "Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers," by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, is announced by Messrs. Ticknor & Fields, Boston.

Mr. Charles Tomlinson, an enthusiastic friend of chess, has proved himself a friend to chess-players by editing for them a *Chess-Player's Annual*, for the year 1856. Its contents, by several hands, are always original, very various, and full of pleasant reference to the great central theme. It contains not only games and problems, but also a great many aphorisms and anecdotes.

THE CALCULATING MACHINE.—*Chambers' Journal* says that the calculating machine turns out to be a more complete and important instrument than was at first believed. It will calculate the power of biquadratic equations, the logarithms for falling bodies from different heights, for projectile forces, tables, or signs, &c., and all by the slow motion of a winch turned by hand. And what is more, it stereotypes the columns of figures after having calculated them. It is a most remarkable piece of mechanism, highly honorable to the inventor.

The Edinburgh *Express* reports that the fifth volume of Mr. Macaulay's *History of England* has been committed to the printer.

CALVIN'S CORRESPONDENCE.—Rev. Dr. 'Aubigne has written a letter to the London *Record*, warmly commending the recently issued volumes of the correspondence of Calvin, which Dr. Jules Bonnet edits. He regards them as exceedingly valuable, and as throwing much light upon the views and character of the great Reformer as well as upon the important era in which he lived. They are worthy of the great name they bear.

NEWSPAPERS.—Dr. Johnson, when in the fulness of years and knowledge, said: "I never take up a newspaper without finding something I would have deemed it a loss not to have seen: never without deriving from it instruction and amusement."

Books Received

AT THE OFFICE OF THE "AMERICAN PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR," SINCE FEBRUARY 23.

*** Publishers are particularly requested to mark the price of each Book, sent to the Publishers' Circular, on the Title-Page.

From Garrett & Co., N. Y.

Henri De La Tour; or, The Comrades in Arms. By J. Frederick Smith. Paper. 50 cents.

Allen Sinclair: or, a Lover's Adventures. Paper. 25 cents.

Charles Vavasseur: or, the Outcast Heir. By the author of "Minnie Gray." Paper, 50 cents.

From E. Darrow & Bros., Rochester.

Summer Vacation Abroad; or, Notes of a Visit to England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy and Belgium. By Rev. F. De W. Ward. 12mo., cloth. pp. 287. 75 cents.

From Saxton & Co., N. Y.

A Complete Manual for the Cultivation of the Cranberry, with a Description of the Best Varieties. 12mo., cloth. pp. 120. 50 cents.

From R. Carter & Bros., N. Y.

The Theology of Inventions: or, Manifestations of Deity in the Works of Art. By the Rev. John Blakely. 12mo. cloth. pp. 294. 75 cents.

From Dix & Edwards, N. Y.

The Mormons at Home; with some Incidents of Travel from California, 1852–3, in a Series of Letters by Mrs. B. G. Ferris, wife of the late U. S. Secretary for Utah. 12mo, cloth. pp. 299. 75 cents.

From J. S. Redfield, N. Y.

The Shakspeare Papers of the late Wm. Maginn, LL.D. Annotated by Dr. Shelton McKenzie. 12mo., cloth. pp. 353. $1 00.

Charlemont: or, the Pride of the Village. A Tale of Kentucky. By G. Simms. 12mo., cloth. pp. 477. $1 25.

From J. Smith Homans, N. Y.

The Merchants and Bankers' Almanac, for 1856. 8vo., cloth. pp. 94. $1 00.

From Crocker & Brewster.

Exercises in Etymology; adapted to Andrews and Stoddard's Latin Grammar, E. A. Andrews, LL.D. 12mo. Bds. 53.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE.

Stringer & Townsend, New York.

THE NAVAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By J. Fennimore Cooper. Abridged by himself, from the full work, for popular reading, with his Latest Corrections, and a Continuation to 1856, from his posthumous MSS. and other authentic sources; including an Account of the Japan Expedition; prepared by the editor of the Octavo Edition. Illustrated with a fine Portrait of the Author, on Steel, and Fifteen Illustrations of the Principal Battle Scenes. In one 12mo. vol., uniform with Cooper's Novels.

FRANK FORRESTER'S YOUNG SPORTSMAN'S COMPLETE MANUAL OF FOWLING, FISHING, AND FIELD SPORTS IN GENERAL. Illustrated from Drawings made from Nature by the Author, Henry William Herbert, Esq. Uniform with "Dinks and Mayhew on the Dog."

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Memoirs of the late John M. Mason, D.D. By the Rev. Dr. Van Vechten. 8vo.

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A Question Book on the Lives of the Patriarchs. Designed for Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes. By John Todd, D.D.

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List of Announcements

OF FORTHCOMING WORKS BY VARIOUS PUBLISHERS.

*** Publishers will confer a favor by sending their new publications as rapidly as issued, that they may be withdrawn from the following list, and inserted in the list of new books.

A Lost Love, by Owen. Lindsay & Blakiston.
A New School Singing Book, on a new plan. A. S. Barnes & Co.
A New Township Map of Iowa. By Hiram Williams & Co. Keene & Lee.
A Sectional Map of Iowa. By Hiram Williams & Co. Keene & Lee.
A Treatise on Physical Geography. Hickling, Swan & Brown.
Abbott's Rollo Books, New Editions. Phillips, Sampson & Co.
Abbott's Practice Reports. Vol. 2. John S. Voorhies.
Addison's Works, New Edition. G. P. Putnam & Co.
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8. None but booksellers to be allowed to bid, or become purchasers at the sales.

9. The Auctioneers to guarantee the delivery of all books sold, within thirty days after the close of sale.

10. The Auctioneers shall cause all books to be insured while in their possession, to an amount within their value, estimated at Trade Sale Prices, when desired by the owners, charging therefor the cost of Insurance.

11. Accounts of Sales to be rendered Thirty Days after the close of the sale, and to be payable in the notes of the Auctioneers, at four months from the last day of sale, subject to a charge of seven and-a-half per cent. for Commission and Guarantee, or in CASH (at the option of the contributor) subject to a charge of nine and a half per cent. for Commission, Guarantee, and Discount. Catalogue to be charged for, at two dollars per page.

12. The charge to purchasers for boxes, packing, and shipping, shall be one per cent. on amount of bills.

13. All deficiencies shall be reported to contributors within thirty days after the receipt of their goods; and if not so reported, the loss shall fall upon the Auctioneers.

14. All goods not settled for within thirty days after the sale (and the purchasers not being deemed responsible for any loss that may accrue on a re-sale), may be charged back to the contributors free of all charge except freight and insurance.

15. The Auctioneers appointed to hold these Sales, agree to hold no Trade Sale in New York except those under the direction of the Publishers' Association.

16. The sales to be under the general direction of the Executive Committee of the New York Book-Publishers' Association, who shall determine whether Invoices offered are in accordance with the rules of the sale, and whose decision as to any question which may arise as to the intent of any regulation of the sale, shall be final.

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